

THE SUGAR QUESTION.

Mr. Blake's Hostility to the Refining Industry.

His Mistaken Views Authoritatively Replied to.

"Take, for example, sugar. They boast of the low price of sugar. Sugar is low here compared with its price here a few years ago, but it is inordinately high here compared with the price in England in the present year. The price of the raw material has fallen enormously. We do not get anything approaching the full benefit of that reduction. We pay infinitely more than they do in England, or in bond at New York. A large part of the excess is paid into the treasury, I frankly admit, a larger sum than I like to see levied on sugar. But a very large part of the excess over the foreign prices, a part approximating on the consumption of the year to \$2,000,000 beyond what goes into the treasury, is paid by the people of Canada in effect to assist the refiners to carry on their business. Now, I pause here, I cannot further this evening discuss this phase of the tariff."

To the Editor of the MONTREAL GAZETTE:

SIR,—In the foregoing extract from the speech of the Hon. Edward Blake, delivered at Malvern, on the 22nd inst., we have a renewal of the old attack on the sugar refining interest.

I attribute to the speaker nothing worse than complete ignorance of the subject, but a heavy responsibility rests with those who have supplied him with the misinformation which induced him to make such statements.

Taking the accusations as he makes them, I assert that each and everyone of them is practically untrue.

1. It is not true that sugar is inordinately high compared with England, for, after deducting the duty paid by the Canadian refiner to the Customs, sugar is actually at this moment, quality for quality, cheaper in Montreal than in London.

Second. It is not true that sugar is dearer in bond here than in New York; for it is, on the contrary, a fact that there is a smaller difference or margin between raw and refined in Canada than in New York, and deducting the same relative drawbacks for duty paid, sugar is cheaper here than there, either in the open market or in bond.

Third. These facts being so, the preposterous assertion that about \$2,000,000 is absorbed by the refiners falls to the ground—no wilder statement was ever made, or one so obviously contrary to facts.

It is notorious that the public is getting the full benefit of the cheapness of the commodity. Is there a man or woman in the Dominion who does not know that sugar is cheaper and better than ever before in his or her experience, notwithstanding the large tribute it yields to the public revenue?

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